

mic motives to the supply of economic needs ; between the idea that a man must not take advantage of his neighbour's necessity, and the doctrine that " man's sin-love vs God's providence " ; between the attitude which appeals to a religious standard to repress economic appetites, and that which regards expediency as the final criterion—there is a chasm which no theory of the permanence and ubiquity of economic interests can bridge, and which deserves at least to be explored. To examine how the latter grew out of the former; to trace the change, from a view of economic activity which regarded it as one among other kinds of moral conduct, to the view of it as dependent upon impersonal and almost automatic forces ; to observe the struggle of individualism, in the face of restrictions imposed in the name of religion by the Church and of public policy by the State, first denounced, then palliated, then triumphantly justified in the name of economic liberty; • to watch how ecclesiastical authority strives to maintain its hold upon the spheres it had claimed and finally abdicates them—to do this is not to indulge a vain curiosity,, but to stand at the sources of rivulets which are now a flood.

Has religious opinion in the past regarded questions of social organization and economic conduct as irrelevant

to the life of the spirit, or has it
endeavoured not only
to christianize the individual but to make a
Christian
civilization ? Can religion admit the
existence of a
sharp antithesis between personal morality
and the
practices which are permissible in
business ? Does the
idea of a Church involve the acceptance of
any particular
standard of social ethics, and, if so, ought a
Church to
endeavour to enforce it as among the
obligations incum-
bent on its members ? Such are a few of the
questions
which men are asking to-day, and on which a
more com-
petent examination of history than I can
hope to offer
might throw at any rate an oblique and
wavering light.